

Message Text

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DRAFTED BY EUR/IB:AWLUKENS:GMD

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FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO AMEMBASSY LISBON PRIORITY

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PGOV, PO

SUBJECT: DEPASSTSEC LAINGEN'S APPEARANCE BEFORE HOUSE
SUBCOM CHAIRED BY FASCELL, MARCH 14, 1975

1. DEPUTY ASSISTANT SECRETARY LAINGEN REPRESENTED THE DEPARTMENT AT AN OPEN HEARING ON PORTUGAL BY HOUSE SUBCOMMITTEE ON POLITICAL AND MILITARY AFFAIRS, ACCOMPANIED BY MESSRS. PEZZULLO AND LUKENS. LAINGEN STATEMENT WAS SENT BY WIRELESS FILE TO LISBON. SUMMARY OF QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS FOLLOWS:

2. FOLLOWING FORMAL STATEMENT, LAINGEN EXPRESSED HIS APPRECIATION FOR CONTINUED INTEREST IN PORTUGAL'S PROBLEMS BUT STRESSED THAT THIS WAS HIGHLY CHARGED AND SENSITIVE PERIOD, AND THAT DEFINITIVE DECISIONS AND JUDGMENTS ARE IMPOSSIBLE TO MAKE. HE STRESSED POSITIVE SIDE OF SITUATION, TRADITION OF FRIENDSHIP BETWEEN TWO COUNTRIES, BASIC WARM FEELING IN PORTUGAL FOR U.S. AS A COUNTRY, AND APPRECIATION

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FOR RECENT U.S. ACTIONS SUCH AS AID SUPPORT.

3. FIRST QUESTIONS INVOLVED ALLEGED U.S. INVOLVEMENT IN COUP ATTEMPT AND ALLEGATIONS ABOUT AMBASSADOR CARLUCCI

PERSONALLY. LAINGEN DENIED STRONGLY ANY U.S. INVOLVEMENT OF ANY KIND AND EXPLAINED THAT CARLUCCI HAD FULL SUPPORT

OF USG AND THAT NEITHER HE NOR ANY ONE ELSE IN USG HAD ANY INVOLVEMENT IN THIS WEEK'S EVENTS. SUGGESTIONS TO CONTRARY WERE NONSENSE. IN ANSWER TO QUESTION, HE SPECIFICALLY STATED THAT CIA WAS NOT INVOLVED. LAINGEN STATED HE REGRETTED INSINUATION THAT USG WAS IN ANY WAY CONNECTED WITH COUP ATTEMPT OR IN OTHER WAYS SEEKING SUBVERT EFFORTS OF PORTUGUESE REVOLUTION, INASMUCH AS WE HAD BEEN TRYING TO SUPPORT PORTUGUESE EFFORTS TOWARDS DEMOCRACY AND HAD SHOWN THIS TANGIBLY BY EXTENDING AID AND IN OUR PUBLIC STATEMENTS.

3. IN RESPONSE TO A QUESTION BY REP. WINN ABOUT WHO HAD MADE THESE ALLEGATIONS, LAINGEN REPLIED THAT ASIDE FROM CARVAHLO INCIDENT, THEY WERE COMING FROM OTHER THAN RESPONSIBLE SOURCES WITHIN GOP. FURTHER QUESTIONS DEALT WITH HUMAN RIGHTS IN PORTUGAL, AND LAINGEN PROMISED TO SUPPLY COMMITTEE WITH STATEMENT (WE ARE SENDING COPY OF HUMAN RIGHTS CABLE TO COMMITTEE ON CLASSIFIED BASIS).

4. IN ANSWER TO QUESTIONS ABOUT AZORES, PEZZULLO REPLIED THAT LAJES WAS IMPORTANT FACILITY AND KEY POINT IN ASW NETWORK. IN LATER QUESTION BY CONG. DIGGS ON AZORES, PEZZULLO REPLIED THAT NEGOTIATIONS WERE CONTINUING BETWEEN TWO COUNTRIES BUT THAT WE DOUBTED THERE WOULD BE MUCH PROGRESS UNTIL AFTER ELECTIONS.

5. WINN WENT ON TO ASK ABOUT SOVIET INVOLVEMENT IN PORTUGAL. LAINGEN REPLIED THAT SOVIETS HAD BEHAVED CORRECTLY BUT THAT THEIR PRESENCE HAD INCREASED SIGNIFICANTLY, TRADE WAS ON THE UP-SWING, AEROFLOT NOW CALLS AT LISBON, AND, OF COURSE, THE SEC GEN OF THE COMMUNIST PARTY IS IN THE CABINET. NOTED ALSO SOVIET CONNECTIONS WITH COMMUNIST GROUPS IN PORTUGAL. BIESTER QUESTIONED LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
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LAINGEN ABOUT THE DECOLONIZATION PROGRAM WHICH LAINGEN EXPLAINED AT LENGTH. THIS LED INTO BRIEF EXPLANATION OF AID USG PLANS FOR BOTH METROPOLE AND COLONIES. BIESTER THEN QUESTIONED LAINGEN ABOUT COMMUNIST PARTY LEADERSHIP, AND WE PROMISED TO SEND AN ANALYSIS TO COMMITTEE ON CLASSIFIED BASIS.

6. REP. DIGGS BEGAN HIS INTERVENTION BY NOTING THAT IT PLEASED HIM TO SEE "EUR EAT CROW", AFTER YEARS OF "SUPPORTING PORTUGUESE REGIME AND APPROVING DECOLONIZATION." HE ASKED WHY AMB. CARLUCCI HAD REPLACED SCOTT AND WHEN LAINGEN REPLIED THIS WAS PRESIDENTIAL DECISION,

DIGGS ASKED IF THERE HAD NOT BEEN POLITICAL REASON FOR

CHANGE. LAINGEN SAID HE DID NOT WISH TO SPECULATE ON PRESIDENTIAL ACTION. FINALLY, AFTER SUGGESTING THAT PERHAPS CARLUCCI'S EFFECTIVENESS WOULD BE DIMINISHED BECAUSE OF ALLEGATIONS AGAINST HIM, DIGGS ADMITTED THAT BOTH AMB. CARLUCCI AND DCM OKUN HAD APPEARED TO HIM ON RECENT TRIP TO BE DOING EXCELLENT JOB. LAINGEN REASSERTED OUR CONFIDENCE IN CARLUCCI AND ENTIRE MISSION AND OUR BELIEF THAT GOP INTENDED TO ABIDE BY ITS ASSURANCES THAT AMB. COULD CARRY OUT HIS MISSION.

7. REP. BUCHANAN QUESTIONED ABILITY OF POLITICAL PARTIES TO BE REPRESENTED IN FREE ELECTION, AFTER SLURS BY NEW REGIME AT PDC AND CDS. LAINGEN POINTED OUT THAT AS OF NOW ALL PARTIES WERE STILL ON VOTING LISTS BUT NOTED THAT RUMORS WERE STRONG THAT CENTER RIGHT PARTIES WOULD BE BANNED. HE WENT ON TO DESCRIBE POLITICAL SPECTRUM.

8. LAINGEN THEN EXPLAINED IN RESPONSE TO BUCHANAN'S QUERY NEW ROLE AFM PLANS TO ASSUME, INCLUDING WHAT WE UNDERSTAND TO BE FUNCTIONS OF REVOLUTIONARY COUNCIL. HE EXPRESSED HOPE THAT HONEST ELECTIONS WOULD HAVE THEIR EFFECT UPON MODERATES IN AFM AND THAT POLITICAL PARTIES WOULD HAVE REAL ROLE TO PLAY IN FUTURE OF PORTUGAL. EXPRESSED HOPE THAT VOTERS WOULD REJECT EXTREMES OF BOTH LEFT AND RIGHT.

9. CHAIRMAN FASCELL ASKED IF THERE EXISTED WITHIN LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
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PORTUGAL ANY POPULAR SUPPORT FOR RELATIONSHIPS WITH THE U.S. AND NATO. LAINGEN REPLIED IN AFFIRMATIVE. HE WENT ON TO NOTE THAT THE UNDERLYING FRIENDSHIP FOR THE U.S. IS STRONG, EVEN THOUGH POSSIBLY SUBMERGED AND MUTED FOR THE MOMENT. LAINGEN OUTLINED PORTUGUESE CONTRIBUTIONS TO AMERICAN SOCIETY AND CITED LONG TRADITION OF CLOSE FRIENDSHIP, BOTH BILATERALLY AND AS NATO ALLIES. HE ALLUDED TO COSTA GOMES' SUPPORT FOR NATO, AS EXPRESSED IN COMMUNIQUE FOLLOWING OCTOBER VISIT, CONTINUING FUNCTIONING OF IBERLANT AND GOP SUPPORT FOR RECENT NATO NAVAL EXERCISE.

10. CHAIRMAN THEN ASKED ABOUT POSSIBILITIES FOR FUTURE VIOLENCE AND WHAT DANGER THERE MIGHT BE FOR AMCITS.

SAID HE ASSUMED CONTINGENCY EVACUATION PLANS AVAILABLE. LAINGEN REPLIED THAT UP-TO-DATE EVACUATION PLAN EXISTED AND AGREED TO SUPPLY COMMITTEE WITH APPROX NUMBERS OF AMCITS, BOTH OFFICIAL AND UNOFFICIAL IN PORTUGAL. HE WENT ON TO STATE OUR CONCERN AT RECENT DEVELOPMENTS,

PARTICULARLY THE EXTREMISM SHOWN IN MEDIA SLOGANS,

VIGILANTES, ETC., AND AN INABILITY TO DRAW CONCLUSIONS
OR MAKE PREDICTIONS. SITUATION CLEARLY DICEY AND IT WOULD
BE WRONG TO PAINT ROSY PICTURE AS TO FUTURE, DESPITE
ASSETS STILL AVAILABLE.

11. IN SUMMARY STATEMENT, CHAIRMAN CHARACTERIZED
PORTUGUESE SITUATION AS "CLASSIC POLITICAL PROBLEM" IN
WHICH AN ORGANIZED INDIGENOUS COMMUNIST PARTY WORKS TO
NEUTRALIZE EFFECT OF USG AND WHERE OUR HANDS ARE TIED
AND OUR OPTIONS LIMITED. HE FEARED THAT POLITICAL FORCES
WOULD BE UNABLE TO WORK FREELY, BUT HOPED THAT EUROPEAN
FRIENDS OF PORTUGAL OR EVEN UN COULD TAKE SOME STEPS TO
SEE THAT PORTUGUESE PEOPLE WERE GIVEN "FAIR SHAKE."
(LAINGEN HAD EARLIER EXPRESSED SAME HOPE, CITING SOME OF
RECENT AGREEMENTS FOR COOPERATION WITH SCANDINAVIANS.)
CHAIRMAN CONCLUDED BY HOPING THAT PORTUGAL COULD RESOLVE
ITS PROBLEMS IN LIGHT OF ITS DESTINY, AND TAKE ITS PLACE
ONCE AGAIN AS FREE MEMBER OF ATLANTIC COMMUNITY.

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12. FYI (ABOVE CLASSIFIED LOU BECAUSE OF EVACUATION PLAN
STATEMENT BUT AMB. MAY OF COURSE DRAW UPON ANY SECTION
WHICH MIGHT BE USEFUL IN DEALING WITH LISBON MEDIA REPS.)

13. SUBCOMMITTEE TONE THROUGHOUT WAS CONCERNED BUT
CONSTRUCTIVE, MEMBERS BEING CLEARLY CONSCIOUS OF SENSI-
TIVITY OF SITUATION IN PORTUGAL AND SPECIAL PROBLEMS
FACING MISSION. INGERSOLL

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